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7 October 1963

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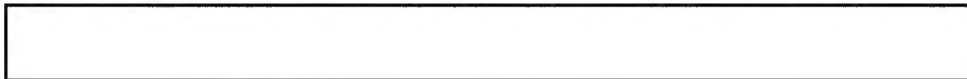
South Vietnam

SUMMARY



State Department review completed

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



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THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

(Information as of 1000 EDT)

1. Madame Nhu, according to latest press reports, is due at Idlewild at 1800 on Pan-American Flight 119. [REDACTED]

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2. If today's UN plenary session goes as planned, the Ceylon delegate will make a statement on Vietnam, followed immediately by the announcement by General Assembly President Sosa-Rodriguez that he is acting on behalf of the South Vietnamese Government to invite observers from Thailand, Ceylon, India, Morocco, Dahomey, Brazil, and Mexico to report on the Buddhist situation. Sosa-Rodriguez will propose adjournment until the observers have completed their mission, and the Ceylon delegate will endorse the proposal. U Thant does not expect objections, with the possible exceptions of Albania and Cuba.

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3. Diem told the opening session of the National Assembly today that Vietnam's enemies, having lost popular support in the countryside, had turned to the cities to create the Buddhist affair with the support of international adventurers and the foreign press. Diem expressed thanks for foreign aid, particularly for the sacrifices of US soldiers. (Comment: FBIS summary makes no reference to the contribution of US civilian advisers, which Secretary Thuan told Ambassador Lodge was in the original draft.)

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5. The Diem regime apparently is arguing that US newsmen stage-managed Saturday's Buddhist suicide. The secretary general of the Foreign Ministry told Ambassador Lodge that the presence of reporters at the suicide scene was "no mere coincidence."

6. Bonze Tri Quang, in asylum in the US Embassy, said the latest suicide victim was one of hundreds of earlier volunteers and that further suicides were likely, since this was the only form of protest left for the Buddhists.

7. The Vietnamese fighter pilot who defected to Cambodia has issued a statement asking asylum as a political refugee, in protest against Diem's "atrocities" against Buddhists. He said the Diem government could not win the war against the Communists. (Diem in his Assembly speech charged that Cambodia now "sides with the Communist bloc.")

8. Tran Kim Tuyen, former security chief who has been ordered to Cairo as consul general, is secretly in Hong Kong engaging in undercover anti-Diem activity, according to the US consul general there. Tuyen's followers in Saigon continue to plan coups, and Tuyen if anything is moving away from Cairo. He says his assignment there has been held up because of the appointment of a North Vietnamese ambassador.

10. [redacted] Col. Tung has released two companies of Special Forces for operations against the Viet Cong. Despite such moves to build up the impression of a return to normal conditions, however, we continue to get reports of arrests and security searches.

[redacted] the generals now are pressing the regime for an answer to their demands, made several weeks ago, for the assignment of military men as ministers of defense, interior, civic action, and education; control of the Saigon-Cholon police; and a permanent military government for the capital region. General Tran Van Don apparently does not expect Diem to accede to the entire package. We expect, however, that Diem and Nhu may offer to meet some of the demands and then drag out negotiations over implementation.

11. [redacted] the Viet Cong showed surprisingly little ability to disrupt the recent election, or to exploit the Buddhist crisis generally by terrorism in the cities. It also finds little evidence to support the thesis that students are fleeing the cities to join the Viet Cong, or that the Viet Cong has made any significant inroads in the student movement.

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